
HCPC NEWSLETTER

Hancock County Planning Commission

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PLANNING NEWS

By Tom Martin

SHORELAND ZONING DEADLINE IS NOW JULY 2009

The May 2008 deadline to meet the revised DEP guidelines has been moved to July 2009. The HCPC has print and electronic copies of the guidelines available for use by towns. The HCPC is also available to assist towns in making the revisions. HCPC has already worked with several towns in drafting the required language. Furthermore, we have the latest electronic copies of the medium and high value wetland maps and can produce a full-color map for your town. Feel free to contact Tom Martin if you have any questions.

NO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE GRANT ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE THIS SPRING, BUT HCPC IS STILL AVAILABLE TO HELP TOWNS

While we do not presently expect grant funds to be available this spring, the HCPC can still work with towns on comprehensive planning issues. Work done with locally raised funds this year could be used as a source of local match to secure grant funds in a future year. Some towns might want to start the process by conducting a public opinion survey, visioning session or some initial work on assessing town trends. We can also help in all other phases of comprehensive planning. Feel free to contact Tom Martin for more information.

BROADBAND

New DSL Broadband Centers and Terminals in Hancock County

Verizon has installed new DSL Broadband equipment that extends access to high speed internet for some residents of Bar Harbor, Castine, Franklin, Sedgwick, Sullivan and Winter Harbor. Verizon typically permits customers to subscribe to DSL if they live within three copper wire circuit miles of a center or remote terminal.

Fair Point Communications has agreed to purchase the Verizon wire line business in northern New England and has promised to extend DSL services into additional un-served areas of Maine. One strategy for doing this is to increase the area served from existing centers and remote terminals. The three-mile limit used by Verizon is not absolute, but service quality and speed decline with distance. Fair Point has also promised to install new centers and remote terminals, but has not specified future installations in Hancock County.

HCPC will help to notify towns when new broadband services are available. For instance, the town office for Sedgwick has gained access In February, 2008. Unfortunately, Hancock County still has large un-served areas.

You can check online to see whether your home, business or town office has DSL Access. Go to www.verizon.com and enter you phone number on the High Speed Internet Link. If service is available for your home or business, you can sign up online. If not, you can provide an email address for future notification of broadband availability.

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

by Jim Fisher

COUNTY-WIDE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE BEING FORMED

The HCPC is seeking representatives to serve on a new County Transportation Advisory Committee. We are inviting towns, transportation stakeholders and representatives of special needs populations to nominate a representative to this committee. The initial meeting is expected to have taken place by

the time this newsletter reaches you, but there is still time to join.

What are the committee's tasks?

The County Transportation Committee will advise staff at the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) and the HCPC on regional transportation planning. The HCPC has a multiyear commitment to prepare corridor management plans in Hancock County. Our first plan will be for east-west corridors and connectors including Route 1, Route 9, Route 46, Route 182 and the Down East Sunrise Trail. The committee or a delegated subcommittee will advise MaineDOT and HCPC, identifying major issues faced by these corridors, reviewing draft documents, and identifying priorities for improvement. If there is sustained interest, the committee may become involved in reviewing other MaineDOT planning documents and helping to set transportation priorities for the region. The committee offers an opportunity to increase county input into state transportation decisions.

Feel free to contact Tom Martin at 667-7131 (e-mail: tmartin@hpcme.org) if you are interested in serving.

Hancock County Workshop: Linking Local Land Use and Transportation

Date: Monday, March 31, 2008 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Location: Ellsworth City Hall, 2nd floor

The Hancock County Planning Commission will host a workshop on local government strategies for linking economic development, land use and transportation. Persons attending will learn about new state programs and policies supporting better coordination between economic development, land use and transportation efficiency. Two speakers will lead off the evening.

Kat Fuller, *Chief of Transportation System Planning, MaineDOT*, will unveil a new municipal guidebook for strategic transportation planning. The municipal guide, in draft form titled *Good Moves or Good Move* is available online at www.hpcme.org/transportation/stpa.

This handbook has two purposes:

1. Provide local planners with the information they need to prepare Transportation Plans that are consistent with the State's Sensible Transportation Policy Act and rule and the transportation element of the State's Growth Management Program; and
2. Provide practical guidance to help municipalities prepare sound transportation standards and strategies that fit well with local zoning, subdivision, and site plan review ordinances." (Good Moves, 2008)

Stacy Benjamin, *Land Use Program Director, Maine State Planning Office* will provide an overview of recent changes to Maine's Growth Management laws. She will give a hands-on demonstration of the new *Self-Assessment Checklist for Comprehensive Planning*. This document provides towns with a clear list of considerations for comprehensive planning and land use ordinances.

There will be time at the end of the program for questions and answers. Light refreshments will be served. This workshop is free and open to the public. Please RSVP to hcpc@hpcme.org so that we can prepare sufficient handouts. Please contact James Fisher at jfisher@hpcme.org or 667-7131 for more information.

Intermodal Transportation: Acadia Gateway, Penobscot Narrows to Ellsworth STAR

Acadia Gateway Center

Over five years ago the state completed the Strategic Passenger Transportation Plan outlining how we can encourage sustainable development in Maine with greater use of transit, rail, ferry and other mass-transportation systems. This plan, which engaged local leaders and transportation providers, is coming to life in Hancock County with one of Maine's biggest bus system setting new records for ridership and a move to create supporting systems to expand our options for intercity travel.

In our fall newsletter we described the Acadia Gateway Center, a multimodal transportation facility planned for Trenton to serve park visitors, particularly day users, and to reduce traffic

congestion in Trenton and Mount Desert Island. Much has happened in the ensuing months. The Friends of Acadia purchased land encompassing the preferred site, located in Trenton approximately two miles north of the current airport entrance road and one and half miles south of the Route 204 intersection. Much of this land was sold to the Maine Department of Transportation and is being surveyed and prepared for construction. Phase one of the project is progressing with a nearly completed design for entrance road infrastructure and a new bus operations center for Downeast Transportation, Inc. (www.downeasttrans.org and www.exploreacadia.org). A public meeting to present this design will be held in Trenton in late March or early April. Announcements and illustrations will be posted to our website soon.



Acadia Gateway Center

Penobscot Narrows

In 2006 HCPC completed a Passenger Transportation Analysis for the Penobscot Narrows (www.hpcme.org/transportation/penobscotnarrows). This analysis identifies several opportunities to expand transit services serving residents and visitors to the region. The Penobscot River continues to grow as a destination, with expanding cruise ship visits to Bangor, Bucksport and Castine. Fort Knox now complimented by the Penobscot Narrows Observatory atop the new bridge is setting records for visitation.

Ellsworth Strategic Transportation and Recreation Center

The next step in our county strategic transportation system may be the creation of an intermodal center for Ellsworth. A planning team has formed representing leadership from the City of Ellsworth, transportation providers, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Sunrise Trail Coalition as well as MaineDOT. A new web page

has been created to publish documents and meeting schedules for this initiative. You can find these at: www.hcpcme.org/landuse/ellsworth/STAR. This facility, if built, can serve local and intercity buses, excursion rail riders, users of the Downeast Sunrise Trail, tourists seeking information and park-and-ride users. HCPC is working with local and regional stakeholders to conduct a feasibility analysis in which we will look at potential uses for an intermodal facility, factors that will contribute to its success and potential locations. Interested persons can contact Jim Fisher for more information. (jfisher@hcpcme.org)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

The Maine Department of Transportation will provide additional funding to HCPC to support local bicycle and pedestrian initiatives. Our goal is to make Hancock County communities more accessible and less dangerous for people who want to walk to school, local businesses, recreation facilities or neighbor's homes. Providing safe walking and bicycling connections within our communities benefits our environment by reducing green house gas emissions. Health benefits include increasing physical activity, reducing risk of injury from collisions, reducing obesity, and benefits our communities by providing social spaces where we can meet and greet.

Now is a good time for towns to identify local priorities and create funds ready to match state and federal grants. MaineDOT will soon publish requests for proposals for Safe Routes to School grants and other transportation enhancement opportunities. If you have not completed the MaineDOT 2008 Municipal project request form, please do so. While the deadline was March 15th, we can still make the case that your town has identified needs that are consistent with grant opportunities. Information and forms are available online at: www.hcpcme.org/transportation/needs.

HCPC staff will be happy to meet with community leaders, town or school committees to develop local plans for new or improved sidewalks, bikeways, shoulder paving or trails. We can also organize education and outreach for bicycle safety training. Contact Jim Fisher (jfisher@hcpcme.org) for more information.

Downeast Transportation, Inc. has a new Website: visit www.downeasttrans.org for year round bus schedules, maps, information on fares and more. For summer Island Explorer Schedules, visit www.exploreacadia.org.

Downeast Transit has completely revamped their year round service, and now offers daily trips to Blue Hill as well as new connections to Bucksport and Bangor.



Downeast Transit routes

SOLID WASTE

HCPC AVAILABLE TO HELP TOWNS WITH SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING NEEDS

Does your transfer station committee need help in developing new recycling strategies? Are you unsure what items are now most cost-effective to recycle? Are you struggling with the management of your construction and demolition debris? The Hancock County Planning Commission has grant funds to pay for staff time to help your town with solid waste and recycling matters. Here are some examples of projects we have underway. We are also available to help you with other ventures.

Municipal Shellfish Composting

Shellfish waste is an odorous and damp waste with high disposal costs. It is, however, also in high demand as a source of compost. We are available to work with towns to help them connect with private sector compost operations. If your town generates a significant volume of shellfish waste, please contact Tom Martin to discuss how we might assist you.

Yard and Leaf Waste Composting

If you find that you are accepting large volumes of yard and leaf waste at your transfer station you may

want to consider developing your own composting site. Unlike waste containing fish or post-consumer food products, the DEP permitting procedures for yard and leaf waste are relatively simple. The HCPC can complete a good portion of the permitting work for a town interested in developing a site. *(See related article on HCPC backyard composting bin sale).*

Help in Finding New Markets for Recycled Materials

As most transfer station managers know, markets for various recycled materials change constantly. For example, metals and newsprint are presently in very high demand but there is little market for glass. One option that the HCPC is presently exploring is recycling of plastic tubs and lids (such as yogurt containers and many other number three through seven plastics). If there is sufficient volume of material, there is a company in Canada that is willing to take tubs and lids. In the past, there have been ventures to process glass into an aggregate used in sub-surface road construction. Use of such materials has been approved by the Maine Department of Transportation and it poses no threat to vehicle tires.

Creative Options for Construction and Demolition Debris Management

All towns face higher road repair expenses due to the increased cost of asphalt. One effective way to reuse asphalt roof shingles is to process them into road paving materials. There is a company in southern Maine that presently runs such an operation. To be cost-effective, the company needs to have a truckload of shingles to collect. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Tom Martin.

HCPC Sponsoring Backyard Compost Bin Sale

While town governments can take major steps to promote sound solid waste management and recycling measures, there is much homeowners and residents can do on their own. Many Hancock County residents are back-yard gardeners and almost every household generates some pre-consumer yard and food waste. It's estimated that 25 percent of the average household's waste consists of yard trimmings and kitchen scraps, which can be

easily composted. Homeowners can end up saving money by composting, because they reduce the amount of waste that is shipped out of town for disposal.

As part of Earth Day 2008 celebrations, the Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC) is participating in a statewide backyard composting bin sale, which will make it even easier for households to maintain and enhance their own compost pile. Through April 11, 2008, a home compost bin and how-to guide with a combined retail value of \$80 can be purchased for only \$37.50 (tax included). The bin is black and is made of 100% recycled plastic. It's approximately 35" high and 33" wide, or large enough for a family of five. It can be dismantled and fit easily in the back seat or trunk of most cars.

To place an order, please mail a check for \$37.50 **made out to MRRA to:**

Composting Project
Hancock County Planning Commission
395 State Street
Ellsworth, Maine 04605

Be sure to include your **name, mailing address, phone number and email address.**



You may use the handy order form included in this newsletter.

Contact Sheri Walsh at 667-7131 or by e-mail at hpc@hpcme.org to learn more. Bins will be available for pick up in Ellsworth on May 14th. When we all work together to increase our recycling, decrease our contribution to outside landfills, and nourish our lawns and gardens in the process, the whole community benefits!

HEALTH NEWS

by Jim Fisher

Regional Health Coordinating Councils

The Hancock County Planning Commission has been an active partner in the Hancock County Coalition for Community Health, supporting county public health initiatives over the past seven years. Our role in recent years has included chairing the Hancock County Coalition for Community Health,

leading the effort to prepare a county substance abuse prevention plan, managing the coalition website and participating in emergency planning for avian influenza. www.healthyhancock.org

Recent reorganization of health services has resulted in the creation of a Washington-Hancock Health region. Staffers in Hancock County's Healthy Communities and Healthy Maine Partners organizations, including Healthy Acadia, Healthy Peninsula (Blue Hill), Bucksport Bay Healthy Communities and Union River Healthy Communities as well as staffers in our Coordinated School Health programs are meeting with organizations in Washington County to create a regional coordinating committee. This regional infrastructure will play an important role supporting school and community health efforts, particularly as the state considers new roles and training requirements for municipal health officers. Information on the reorganization will be posted to www.healthyhancock.org, which over time will reflect programs of our new regional organization.

Health and Tobacco-Free Playgrounds

Awareness of the negative effects of second-hand tobacco smoke is growing. Data suggest that second-hand smoke contributes to attacks of asthma among children and can even precipitate heart attacks among people with existing heart conditions. Smoking is now banned from most indoor public spaces, including town offices, schools, restaurants and public transportation. The effort to further reduce exposure to second-hand smoke has moved outdoors. Hancock County's Healthy Maine Partners staffer Sally Christ is meeting with community groups around the county and encouraging towns to adopt new policies to assure safety from second-hand smoke. The Hancock County Planning Commission is a partner in this effort to provide essential services for public health. One way we can do that is to provide towns with information and model ordinances to promote smoke-free playgrounds for our children.

Much like current laws that have contributed to dramatically cleaner air in our indoor environments, Smoke-Free Playground ordinances provide parents with the assurance that their children will not be forced to breathe second-hand tobacco smoke at

public playgrounds. Several schools in Hancock County have adopted smoke-free policies that include smoke-free athletic fields and announcements of school policies at athletic events.

The HCPC will be happy to assist towns in developing language supporting healthier, smoke-free environments. Please visit the following website for more information about second-hand smoke and model policies for cleaning our air. www.tobaccofreemaine.org/dangerspf.html or contact Jim Fisher (jfisher@hpcme.org).

Upcoming Common Health Programs

Common Health is a community radio series hosted by Jim Fisher of the Hancock County Planning Commission. Common Health airs on the third Wednesday of every month from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. on WERU-FM (89.9 Midcoast and Downeast, 102.9 in Bangor, weru.org on the web). Many of our past programs have been made available online at www.commonhealth.org.

Upcoming programs:

March 19: On Dying:
Palliative Care and the Hospice Movement

April 16: Smart Growth:
A combination of better designed communities & sustainable economic development is gaining currency in Maine.

May 21: Clean and Sober:
The road to recovery from drug and alcohol abuse and dependence.

STAFF NEWS

Jen Boothroyd left the HCPC in February 2008 to take a position at Eastern Maine Development Corporation. While we will miss her dedication, good humor and laugh, we are pleased that she found a promising position. Tom Martin is presently assuming her solid waste duties and Jim Fisher is doing the GIS mapping work.

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 31, 2008
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Ellsworth City Hall, Auditorium
Topic: *Linking Local Land Use and Transportation*
(see related article in Transportation News)

May 27, 2008
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Ellsworth Library Public Meeting Room (enter
lower level, river side)

Hancock County Planning Commission Annual Meeting

Guest speaker: Mike Hyde, *Vice-President for Advancement at Jackson Laboratories*, **Topic:** *Challenges and Opportunities faced by the Lab in Hancock County*

May 28, 2008
5:00 PM – 8:30 PM
VFW Hall, Washington Junction Road, Ellsworth
Striking a Balance Workshop # 12
Topic: *Affordable Housing an Agenda for Action*
Pre-registration will be necessary. More information will be provided as the date approaches.

Hancock County Planning Commission is a partner with local and county government to: protect our heritage and resources, plan for the future and promote a sound economy for the people of Hancock County.

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Change Service Requested